

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 OMB-01 /077 W
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P R 200746Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5216
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, KS, KN, US
SUBJECT: KOREAN PRESS REACTION TO RETURN OF HELICOPTER CREW

REF: SEOUL 5920 (DTG 160503Z JUL 77)

SUMMARY: KOREAN PRESS CRITICAL OF USG HANDLING HELICOPTER
CREW RETURN. END SUMMARY.

1. KOREAN PRESS JULY 18-20, WHILE WELCOMING SPEEDY RESOLUTION
OF INCIDENT, EXPRESSED DISPLEASURE WITH "LOW POSTURE" TAKEN
BY U.S. IN NEGOTIATIONS TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF CREW OF
HELICOPTER SHOT DOWN JULY 14. HAN'GUK ILBO CARRIED ON
FRONT PAGE LOCAL REUTERS STORY, ATTRIBUTED TO "DIPLOMATIC
SOURCES IN SEOUL," THAT NORTH KOREANS' (NK) OBJECT IS TO
OPEN DIRECT DIALOGUE WITH U.S. WITHOUT ROK PRESENT. HAN'GUK
ILBO EDITORIAL COMPARED "GLORIOUS SACRIFICE" OF CREW,
WHICH REFUSED TO SURRENDER, UNFAVORABLY TO "WEAKNESS" OF
PRESIDENT CARTER'S APOLOGY OVER INCIDENT. NATIONALISTIC
CHOSON ILBO WENT FARTHER IN FEATURE ARTICLE WHICH RECOUNTED
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ITS REPORTER'S "SICKENED FEELING" AT STATEMENT BY UN COMMAND
THAT IT WOULD ACCEPT "ANY REASONABLE SUGGESTION" FOR RETURN
OF CREW AND AT NK SELF-DEPICTION AS "HUMANITARIAN."

2. HAN'GUK ILBO EDITORIAL SPECULATED NK PURPOSE IN
"PROVAOCATION" WAS TO CAUSE AMERICANS TO WEARY OF GUARDING
ARMISTICE LINE, TO ENGINEER ALIENATION OF ROK AND U.S.,

AND TO ACHIEVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH U.S. WRITERS ASKED QUEROUSLY
WHETHER U.S. WOULD FALL FOR NK TRICKS.

3. IN THIS LATTER CONNECTION, ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS JULY 20,
ESPECIALLY GOVERNMENT KOREA HERALD, DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE
FRONT-PAGE SPACE TO SPECULATIONS IN U.S. THAT INCIDENT WOULD
"GENERATE NEW PRESSURE TO RECONSIDER" CARTER'S PULL-OUT
POLICY, QUOTING U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT OF JULY 25 AND
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR EDITORIAL OF JULY 18. BOTH
PAPERS ALSO GAVE PROMINENT PLAY TO ORIENT PRESS STORY
DATELINED UNITED NATIONS WHICH QUOTED "U.N. DIPLOMATIC
OBSERVERS" SPECULATION THAT "SOME KIND OF INFORMAL CONTACTS
BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND P'YONGYANG MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE
THROUGH UNKNOWN DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS." ARTICLE SURFACES
PERENNIAL KOREAN WORRY ABOUT "SECRET DEALS BETWEEN
WASHINGTON AND P'YONGYANG" AS ONLY EXPLANATION FOR
"SUDDEN CONCILIATION" ON PART OF NK AND HINTS THAT
UNUSUALLY LONG ABSENCE (SINCE MID-APRIL) OF NK PERMANENT
U.N. OBSERVER KOWN MIN-JUN "MIGHT BE RELATED."

4. BY JULY 20, WHEN TOPIC HAD ALMOST DISAPPEARED FROM
VERNACULAR PRESS, CHOSON ILBO, IN A SECOND EDITORIAL, ASSUMED
A MORE CONFIDENT TONE. ALTHOUGH NOTING NK INTENTION OF
COSYING UP TO U.S. WITH ITS PLAN (ADVANCED AGAIN ON JULY 17,
DAY AFTER RETURN OF CREW) FOR CONCLUSION OF PEACE PACT, WRITERS
STATED NK CANNOT HIDE ITS DISAPPOINTMENT AT USSR AND PRC,
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WHICH "SHOW NO TRACE OF INTENTION TO OPPOSE U.S." AND SPECULATED
THAT NK'S ARE VERY WORRIED THAT SECRETARY VANCE, IN HIS
TRIP TO PEKING NEXT MONTH, MIGHT DISCUSS KOREAN SITUATION
ALONG LINES "DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THEY WANT." WRITER
CONCLUDES BY POINTING OUT THAT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION
"WILL NOT ALLOW REALIZATION OF THEIR SCHEMES."
SNEIDER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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